Ethnicity pay gap 2024 – explained

Cranfield University

This is our third ethnicity pay gap report, and while there is no statutory requirement to publish this, we remain committed to transparency and equity in pay and improving representation of our ethnically diverse staff.

The data informs us about areas where we need to make progress, and to implement relevant action plans in line with our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and People strategies.

Definitions

The pay gap is the percentage difference between the average hourly earnings of White and Minority Ethnic staff across the University. This is different to equal pay, which shows us whether there are differences in pay between White and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff doing comparable work.

Summary

We are pleased to report a decrease in our ethnicity pay gap for 2024. The mean pay gap is 15.5%, a 0.9% decrease from 2023, while the median pay gap is 7.7%, representing a 3.5% fall compared to 2023.

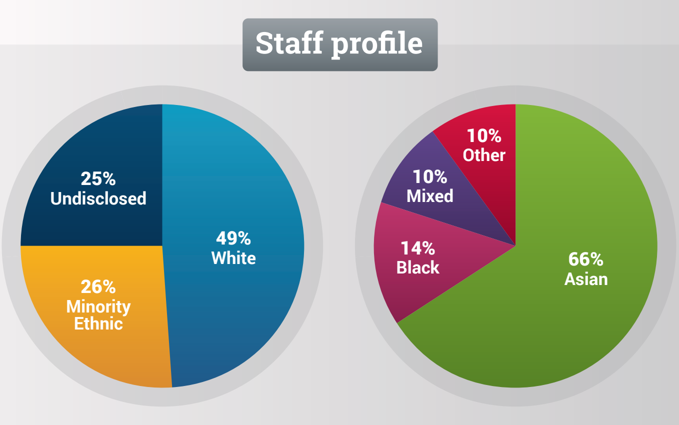
These two figures reflect a period of relatively low recruitment and staff turnover, but where we have recruited this is reflected in the reduction of our pay gap (explained in more detail later in this report).

Data

Our figures are based on a data 'snapshot' taken on 31 March 2024 and cover the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. As there is no legislative guidance for ethnicity pay gap reporting, we have chosen to report our pay gap in line with the UCEA benchmark ethnicity pay gap survey, which reports for the ethnicity groups of White, Asian, Black, Mixed and Other. We respectfully use these terms for pay gap reporting, while acknowledging the shortcomings of these labels, and that categories inherently bring limitations in terms of being able to understand complex, intersecting identities and lived experiences for minoritised ethnic staff.

The pay gap statistics

Staff profile



Increase in minoritised ethnic representation

- The number of minoritised ethnic staff increased during the reporting period, from 459 to 489, an increase of 6.5% over the previous year.
- 26% of the total workforce are Black, Asian, or Minority Ethnic, up from 25% the previous reporting year.
- The number of UK Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic staff has increased from 129 last year to 164, and now represent 9% of the University's total workforce. This is an increase of 2% from last year, progressing toward our 2027 KPI of 12% UK Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic staff.

As of March 2024, 26% (n=489) of the University's staff were Minority Ethnic, an increase of 2% on the previous year. This compares favourably to the wider HE sector, which stands at 17.5%[1]. This overall increase is the direct result of a 6.5% increase in the number of staff within this group since the last reporting period.

The composition of Minority Ethnic staff above shows that 66% (n=323) of this group identify as Asian, 14% (n=68) as Black, 10% (n=48) identify as Mixed ethnicity and 10% (n=50) as Other ethnicity.

While we have taken a number of positive actions over the reporting period, our staff profile shows that Black, Asian and other minoritised ethnic people continue to be underrepresented at Cranfield, especially in professional services and senior roles. We do, however, continue to attract and recruit ethnically diverse people into our research roles.

This is the first year of reporting our pay gap data after a change to the statutory recording of ethnicity data (introduced in July 2023, following revisions to the ethnicity categories by the Higher Education Statistics Agency - HESA). Changes to the categories which staff report white ethnicity were introduced by HESA which required staff to re-share their ethnicity data with us.

We have run several campaigns that have successfully prompted many staff members to re-share their ethnicity information. However, a significant proportion of staff have yet to do so.

As shown above, the number of staff with no ethnicity recorded has increased considerably since the last reporting period, and totals 469, an increase of 417 from the previous year.

Lower sharing rates limits our ability to conduct comparative analysis. We are committed to addressing this issue and are continuing to actively encourage staff to share this information.

[1] *Advance HE staff statistical report 2024.*

Pay gap

Mean (average)	Year	Median (middle)
15.5%	2024	7.7%
16.4%	2023	11.2%
15.8%	2022	6.3%

The mean ethnicity pay gap for 2024 was 15.5%, a 0.9% decrease from the previous year, while the median pay gap was 7.7%, representing a 3.5% fall.

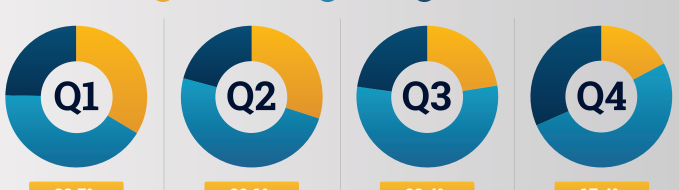
Our data shows that ethnically minoritised people are underrepresented at Cranfield, especially at senior levels, which reflects strongly in our ethnicity pay gap.

We acknowledge that grouping staff into broad categories can mask important differences in lived experiences. To address this, we analysed the difference in pay across individual minority ethnic groups. The data below shows that, with the exception of the 'Other' ethnicity group (mean), the gap in the mean and median salaries between White staff and Minority Ethnic staff (all groups) has narrowed since last year. However, it remains evident that the largest pay disparity continues to be with Black staff.

Year	Asian Mean	Asian Median	Black Mean	Black Median	Mixed Mean	Mixed Median	Other Mean	Other Median
2024	13.7%	6.7%	27.3%	20.9%	14.4%	4.3%	12.3%	2.4%
2023	14.1%	7.2%	28.7%	24.6%	19.7%	17.7%	11.7%	4.1%
2022	12.4%	3.7%	30.2%	20.2%	24%	23.4%	10.2%	-3.1%

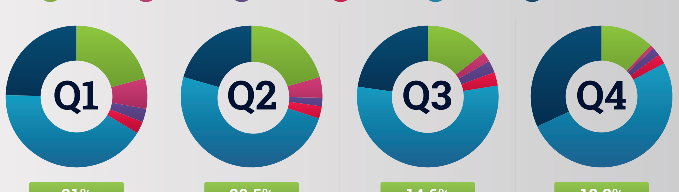
Proportion of Minority Ethnic and White staff in each pay quartile

The pay quartiles are calculated by dividing our workforce into four equal bands from the lowest hourly rate of pay (quartile 1) to the highest (quartile 4). If there is a higher proportion of any ethnic group at the upper or lower quartiles, then this will impact the overall pay gap.



	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Minority Ethnic	33.7%	30.1%	22.4%	17.4%
White	41.7%	49.4%	54.9%	51%
Undisclosed	24.6%	20.5%	22.7%	31.6%
Change in proportion of Minority Ethnic staff in the quartile from 2023	-2.3%	+7.1%	+1.5%	-0.6%

The graphics above shows the distribution of Minority Ethnic staff across the pay quartiles. Minority Ethnic staff make up 26% of the overall University population, but are underrepresented in the higher pay scales, particularly in quartile 4. This is explained further by looking at the distribution of individual ethnicity, as shown below.



	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Asian	21%	20.5%	14.6%	12.3%
Black	6.8%	4.7%	2.1%	0.9%
Mixed	3.2%	2.1%	3%	1.9%
Other	2.7%	2.8%	2.7%	2.3%
White	41.7%	49.4%	54.9%	51%
Undisclosed	24.6%	20.5%	22.7%	31.6%

Bonus pay gap

Proportion of employees receiving a bonus

Minority Ethnic	Year	White
7%	2024	18.7%
6.8%	2023	20.3%
7%	2022	19.1%

As in previous years, a lower percentage of Minority Ethnic staff received a bonus in the period comparison to White staff. As shown in above, 7% of Minority Ethnic staff received a bonus compared to 18.7% of White staff during the reporting period.

There could be several reasons for this difference, however further analysis shows that as in last year's report, a significant proportion of our Minority Ethnic staff as being on fixed-term contracts, with the majority of these being research-based. More research assistants/fellows have been employed due to the University successfully securing funded research. However, due to the nature of this research funding, these types of contracts offer less scope for the rewarding of bonus payments. These roles do, however, benefit from other forms of reward which are not reflected in the bonus pay gap reporting, such as promotion, annual salary increments, and moves into a high-performance zone at each salary level.

We remain committed to reviewing the employment and progression pathways of Minority Ethnic staff, particularly those in fixed-term research roles, to ensure that opportunities for career development, long-term progression, and reward structures remain as fair and transparent as possible.

We perform Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) for our annual pay and reward review to assess whether there are any inequalities in the awarding of pay increases and reward.

There are two types of bonus payments:

Recognition award
This is open to all staff and is based on exceptional performance.

Bonus scheme
The bonus scheme for senior managers is based on the achievement of key targets which includes areas such as income and business generation.

Difference in bonus payment beween Minority Ethnic and White staff

Mean (average)	Year	Median (middle)
31.9%	2024	-20%
49.7%	2023	20%
42.8%	2022	20%

The mean and median bonus pay gaps have both decreased since last year, now standing at 31.9% and -20%, respectively. The average bonus received by White staff is 31.9% higher than that received by Minority Ethnic staff, whereas the median bonus amount is 20% lower. Two key factors contribute to this. First, the underrepresentation of minority ethnic staff in senior roles, who typically receive the highest bonuses. Second, a significant proportion of staff with unrecorded ethnicity are in the highest pay levels. The impact of this has lowered the median bonus amount for the White staff group, subsequently reducing the overall median pay gap.

As stated above, other forms of recognition are in place at Cranfield, such as promotion, accelerated salary increments, and moves into a high-performance zone at each salary level, and these are not reported in our bonus pay gap figures.

Key factors affecting our ethnicity pay gap

Workforce distribution

Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic people are underrepresented at Cranfield, especially at senior levels, which reflects strongly in our ethnicity pay gap. The graphics below show the pay distribution of our white and minoritised ethnic groups.

In comparison to the University profile, where Minoritised Ethnic staff make up approximately 26% of the total workforce, representation remains higher in the lower and middle salary levels but declines significantly at senior levels (L6 and above).

Level	Minoritised Ethnic	White	Undisclosed
Casual	60% (82)	20% (27)	20% (28)
Real living wage	26% (7)	48% (13)	26% (7)
L2		53% (9)	47% (8)
L3	13% (17)	54% (69)	32% (41)
L4	24% (82)	51% (172)	24% (81)
L5	31% (141)	53% (244)	16% (76)
L6	23% (82)	50% (182)	27% (97)
L7	20% (54)	50% (132)	30% (79)
L8/Professorial	12% (18)	54% (81)	34% (51)

- 32% (+1% since last year) of our academic staff are Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic[1].
- 15% (+6% since last year) of our Professorial staff are Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic[1].

Our ethnicity pay gap is influenced by a range of structural and workforce composition factors. While the overall representation of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic staff has increased, contract types, and seniority levels continue to impact the pay gap figures.

Workforce composition and contract types

A key factor contributing to the ethnicity pay gap is the higher proportion of Minoritised Ethnic staff employed in research-based roles, many of which are fixed-term contracts. These roles are typically funded through external research grants, which determine salary levels and provide limited access to bonus payments. As a result, the bonus pay gap is disproportionately affected.

Representation in senior roles

While overall representation of Minoritised Ethnic staff at Cranfield has grown to 26% of the workforce, the proportion of Minoritised Ethnic staff in senior academic and leadership positions remains proportionately lower. Since pay gap calculations are influenced by pay distribution across different levels of the organisation, underrepresentation in senior roles continues to drive pay disparities.

[1] *Source: EDI Annual report 2023-2024.*

Snapshot of initiatives and actions we are taking to help close the gap

AdvanceHE's Race Equality Charter

- Joined the pilot scheme for small and specialist institutions for the Race Equality Charter.
- Conducted focus groups and surveys to understand the lived experiences of Minoritised Ethnic staff.

National Inclusion Week 2023

- We celebrated National Inclusion Week for the first time, marking a milestone in our commitment to fostering inclusion.

Workload and wellbeing

- We recognise the importance of staff wellbeing and work-life balance and continue to provide a range of wellbeing support services. These include the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), Occupational Health Service, Mental Health First Aiders, resilience sessions, wellbeing campaigns, and access to physio services. While recent staff surveys have highlighted increased concerns around workload, the University remains committed to supporting staff wellbeing through ongoing initiatives and resources.

Looking ahead

To continue addressing the ethnicity pay gap and advancing race equality, our action plan includes initiatives at each stage of the employee lifecycle.

A key priority is to remove barriers to career progression and promotion for Minoritised Ethnic staff, ensuring equitable access to leadership roles and professional development, linked to our *Change the Race Ratio* commitment.

Actions include:

- introduce a reverse mentoring programme, pairing senior leaders with less senior staff to foster greater awareness of workplace barriers and career challenges and to promote inclusion;
- review promotion pathways and internal progression structures to enable equal access to career advancement; address career progression disparities identified through focus groups and surveys;
- strengthen support for staff networks, providing structure and platforms for advocacy;
- develop an action plan following an equal pay review;
- deliver a National Inclusion Week programme of events and speakers that highlights race equality, leadership, and workplace inclusion;
- conduct a campaign to encourage increased sharing rates for ethnicity;
- continue EIAs of pay awards and pay gaps.